

Letter to the Editor:

To add some perspective to the Gazette's Jan. 5 article, entitled "Kensington Councilwoman Petitions Against Sector Plan", I would point out it's been 33 years since the Town's Sector Plan has been updated. With the strong support of the community and two different Town Councils, we have worked with Montgomery County staff and Park and Planning officials to produce a workable blueprint for Kensington's future.

This plan has been aired, discussed and debated since 2007, starting with a community meeting where more than 200 public comments were voiced. We have held dozens of publicly advertised meetings, including community sessions, one-on-one meetings, coffee chats, neighborhood gatherings in living rooms and meetings with business owners. The Town commissioned the renowned Urban Land Institute (ULI) to help guide us with concepts for the future of Kensington.

Where some apparent concern still exists, is over the height and density limits proposed for future buildings near major roads, like Connecticut Avenue. Initially, the updated Plan discussions noted heights up to 125 feet. That has since been capped at 75 feet (The tallest existing building in Kensington is over 108 feet; the former 1978 Sector Plan included buildings as high as 94 feet). Appropriate heights and densities are key elements of the Plan, and must be incorporated carefully for the Town to maintain its comfortable, small-town charm. Anything less would do a disservice to the greater community.

This new Plan strives to set a course for Kensington's future, revitalizing where necessary, refreshing when possible. With the good guidance and support of the Planning Board, it will improve our traffic patterns, protect the Historic District, add housing options, create public amenities, attract new business and services, improve pedestrian safety and enhance public landscapes. The Sector Plan has been unanimously approved by the Town Council and County Planning Board, as well as the Coalition of Kensington Communities (comprising of 7,000 households). If Kensington is to remain a desirable place to live, work and visit, this long-range plan – which has been exhaustively reviewed – deserves prompt County Council approval.

Peter Fosselman  
Mayor of Kensington